

## HOUSE BILL NO. 549

INTRODUCED BY S. DICKENSON

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING COLLABORATION TEAM; ESTABLISHING THE PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEAM; CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

WHEREAS, there was previously an environmental public health tracking project as a part of the Department of Public Health and Human Services that through data integration and community assessment accomplished a great deal before losing its federal funding in 2006; and

WHEREAS, community assessments through the environmental public health tracking project identified health concerns in communities across Montana, in particular health concerns resulting from air and water pollution and the incidence of cancer; and

WHEREAS, Montana's citizens perceive that the rate of certain chronic diseases is increasing, particularly among children, and question whether there are environmental connections to those diseases; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan, 2006-2011, cited the importance of improving the availability, accessibility, and utilization of cancer-related data; and

WHEREAS, the tragedy of inaction in Libby, Montana, resulting in unacceptable suffering and death, must not be repeated elsewhere.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Environmental public health tracking collaboration team.** (1) There is an environmental public health tracking collaboration team consisting of employees of each of the following state agencies that have responsibility for protection of public health, air quality, water quality, and the management of pesticides and herbicides. Each member must be appointed by the director of the respective state agency:

- (a) the department of public health and human services;
- (b) the department of environmental quality; and
- (c) the department of agriculture.

(2) The department of public health and human services shall provide staff support to the environmental public health tracking collaboration team.

(3) The purposes of the environmental public health tracking collaboration team are to:

(a) link existing information on environmental hazards, people's exposure to these hazards, and the health effects that may be related in order to reduce the risk of environmentally related health problems throughout Montana;

(b) disseminate information about environmentally related public health concerns to the legislature, state agencies, interest persons, and health care providers;

(c) coordinate and work collaboratively with other state and federal agencies and public health programs to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance existing state systems; and

(d) pursue federal funding grants.

(4) The environmental public health tracking collaboration team shall work with the natural resource information system referred to in 90-15-301 and other state and federal agencies to make public health and related environmental hazard information available and readily accessible in a usable format to the legislature, state agencies, interested persons, and health care providers.

(5) The environmental public health tracking collaboration team shall:

(a) elect a presiding officer; and

(b) meet at least monthly.

(6) The environmental public health tracking collaboration team shall report at least quarterly to the environmental quality council, established in 5-16-101, and submit a report to the legislature on or before September 1 of the year preceding each legislative session.

**NEW SECTION. Section 2. Federal funding for environmental public health tracking -- federal special revenue account.** (1) There is an account in the federal special revenue fund into which must be deposited:

(a) up to \$50,000 from public health emergency preparedness federal grant money; and

(b) money from other federal grants.

(2) The money in the account is allocated to the department of public health and human services to support the environmental public health tracking collaboration team established in [section 1].

1        NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified  
2        as an integral part of Title 50, and the provisions of Title 50 apply to [sections 1 and 2].

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4 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2009.

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